

*Jennifer McPhail*  
2501 Anken Dr. #2001  
Austin, Texas 78741  
Ph. (512) 627-5869  
[jennifer.adapt@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jennifer.adapt@sbcglobal.net)

Dear Bond Advisory Task Force Members,

I regret that I will not be able to attend tonight's meeting. On April 23, 2012 I and 73 other members of ADAPT were arrested for protesting cuts to Medicaid proposed by Congressman Paul Ryan. I have unexpectedly been ordered back to court for a hearing first thing Tuesday morning.

I am writing to inform you that my two highest priorities for funding in the bond package are transportation and affordable housing. The Transportation and Affordable Housing projects proposed in this bond package will have a transformative effect on the lives of Austinites for generations to come. It is for this reason that I believe that the task force should recommend that transportation projects receive funding at a minimum of \$142.2 million and affordable housing projects should receive \$90 million. This amount differs from what is being deliberated tonight. I propose the task force redirect \$14.2 million from Open Space Acquisition.

#### *Transportation*

I support the transportation projects before the task force tonight. However, because some task force members have suggested that we cut the North Lamar/Burnet project completely I will focus my comments on it.

The City of Austin Sidewalk Master Plan has given this area of North Lamar its highest rating for dangerous pedestrian conditions, and a recent North Lamar Pedestrian Safety Study documented 70 crashes involving pedestrians on selected sections of North Lamar between 2001 and 2009. Burnet Road also ranks very high in priority according to the Sidewalk Master Plan.

According to the City of Austin Sidewalk Master Plan and other city data, Austin has spent around \$4.1 million a year for the past ten years to install and/or repair sidewalks, but \$800 million of work still needs to be done to make all Austin sidewalks safe, usable, and ADA-compliant. If the City of Austin continues at this pace it will take 200 years to address accessibility and connectivity of our sidewalk network. We have an obligation as this Task Force to make sure that pedestrians do not have to die while waiting 200 years for safe, usable, and ADA-compliant sidewalks.

### *Affordable Housing*

Housing costs in Austin have risen by 85 percent in the past 10 years. Currently, only one in six renters earning less than \$20,000 per year can find affordable housing in Austin, and the number of renters needing housing at this level of affordability exceeds the number of affordable units on the market by 36,700. The vast majority of these renters work in retail and service jobs. Many are single parents, retired, or disabled. People receiving SSI make \$698 a month. That is about 15% of MFI. If we cannot serve these Austinites by using the recommended amount of bond funds to create truly affordable housing, we have failed not just them but the community as a whole.

### *Accessibility*

Inaccessible housing is substandard. This task force must support the Architectural Barrier Program. This program assists people in making apartments and single family homes accessible.

I was 19 years old before I lived in a home that was accessible to me. I had to rely on family to enter and leave our home or get into the bathroom. This meant that I could only use the bathroom when someone was available to me. I almost never drank any fluids. When I was 14 years old I became very ill. One night I had to be rushed to the emergency room because my bowels were blocked. I was bleeding so profusely that the floor in our apartment was covered in blood. My mom could not dress me because I was too weak to stand. She applied pressure to my rectum with a towel and carried me to the car. She drove with one hand on the wheel and the other on me. They were able to stop the bleeding at the hospital. That night was one of the worst nights of my life. I am healthy because I live in an accessible apartment. We must do all we can to ensure that no one has to endanger their health or safety because we have chosen not to prioritize affordable, accessible, integrated housing.

Sincerely,

Jennifer McPhail

Bond Advisory Task Force Member